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THEODORE ROOSEVELT



MEMORIAL MEETING

AT

THE EXPLORERS CLUB

MARCH 1, 1919.

MR. VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

President, Explorers Club, Presiding

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The Chairman: I realize of course that it is impossible for me to rise to this occasion, but I am somewhat consoled by the thought that there are perhaps few who could rise to it fully. We have to commemorate tonight, or to call to mind again, a man who is beyond praise. I wrote a letter about five years ago to Colonel Roosevelt, and I will repeat now what I said then, that it seemed to me he was already so distinguished that in the field of exploration he could win no laurels which would add materially to his fame. It has always seemed to me that no matter how distinguished an explorer is, he can never by that fact become the foremost figure in the world, as Roosevelt was in the minds of men during the last decade and more of his life.

After his journey to Africa came his South American trip. He had been an explorer in other fields before, but this was an important journey of geographic exploration. At the end of it, in a manner that was characteristic of him, he tried hard to get the world to acknowledge the merits of his fellow travelers, the men who had worked with him in South America, and especially of Colonel Rondon. I am aware that many here knew Roosevelt more intimately than I did. I hadn't met him until about six years ago, and since then my acquaintance with him has been limited to three meetings and half a dozen letters; but I did know something about his support of and interest in Colonel Rondon. It seemed to me that in relation to South America Colonel Rondon was really a big figure, and feeling that way I named a cape on the west coast of one of our new lands after him, and requested Colonel Roosevelt to notify Colonel Rondon of this fact, saying at the same time that it was the least I

could do to recognize a great work. In reply I received a letter, a part of which I will read to you, and which is thoroughly characteristic of one side of Colonel Roosevelt. I omit the parts personal to myself.

"My dear Mr. Stefansson: Today I received your letters of May 17, 1916 and February 9, 1917. I haven't the faintest idea of whether this letter will reach you or not, but I must write to tell you . . . how gratified I am at what you have done about Colonel Rondon. He has had no proper recognition of his really great feats, although I tried to get both the English and the American Geographic Societies to do as they ought to have done for him. My own feats need no special recognition. About all I would say of myself is that compared with other Presidents, Prime Ministers and the like I did some work worth doing. I don't come, as Colonel Rondon does, in the explorer's class, which would include. . . Peary, Amundsen, Nansen, Scott, Shackleton, Livingston, Baker, Speke, Grant, Hedin, Swinefurth, and the other men who did very big things. . . . "

I think that list of names is striking in itself. It is a very unconventional thing to do, but really I would like to know how many in this room, members of the Explorers Club, know who Swinefurth was. Will those who know who he was please rise. (9 of those present rise.)

A Member: I have an indistinct recollection of who he was.

The Chairman: (continuing) Nine. Even we who are specialists in exploration know little about him, and perhaps 3 or 4, on a chance, out of the 8 or 9, who have heard of Swinefurth could justify the statement Colonel Roosevelt made that he was one of the great figures among explorers. But I know from a conversation with Roose-

velt that his mind was clear as to what Swinefurth had done and just why he is among the great explorers of all time.

"Of course I am glad I had the chance to explore an unexplored river and put it on the map. I was past middle age at the time, and knew this would be the last thing of the kind I could hope to do. In my case the exploration was its own reward. But Colonel Rondon ought to have the full recognition which he has not received, and I shall write him at once of your just and generous offer . . . "

That was characteristic of the man who knew things which the rest of us didn't know. He not only knew where honor was due, but he was always taking trouble to see that the laurel wreathes go to those to whom they of right belonged.

It seemed to me Colonel Roosevelt was practically a specialist in everything. The first time I saw him he discussed two things that I believed I knew more about than any other person in America, and he certainly knew more about those things than anybody else I have talked with. I have talked frequently with professors in American Universities whose special province it is to deal with the history and literature of Iceland, and I don't think one of them had the feeling of Icelandic literature nor the grasp of Icelandic history that Roosevelt did. I don't know anybody in America from whom he could have borrowed them, because I never met any one else who had them. He probably was a pioneer in this as in many other things. The same spirit of discovery probably took him into Icelandic history that took him into the Brazilian jungle. Perhaps Lord Bryce, when he was in Washington, borrowed from Roosevelt an interest in Iceland, or perhaps Roosevelt was guided by Bryce, or perhaps they were in this independent. In any case it is interesting that Lord Bryce has

recently expressed in a book the same opinion that Roosevelt expressed to me verbally six years earlier—that the classic literature of Iceland is in excellence intermediate between the classic literatures of Greece and Rome. I quote here Roosevelt and Bryce together both to show that here as often Roosevelt was the pioneer and to point out to anyone who disagrees with his estimate of Icelandic literature that if he erred, he at least erred in goodly company.

He was, as you know, interested in everything, and therefore naturally in my project now before the Governments of Canada and the United States in regard to the musk ox. It takes a long time to overcome the inertia of the ordinarily intelligent person. For instance, there is a member of my own expedition, who had seen musk oxen, and had been in the North a few years, and when he read in the newspapers of my plans he said: "If Stefansson can get away with this I shall lose my faith in human nature." He said this of the identical proposition I sent to Roosevelt, and the project, the attempt to carry out which would have made my imaginationless friend lose his faith in human nature, brought from the Colonel the following comment:

"I most emphatically wish your project well Our domestic animals are merely those of Asia, because it was in Asia that civilization first arose, and in consequence as it penetrated to other continents men found it easier to use the animals already tamed than to tame new ones It is a capital misfortune that the musk ox has not been tamed. To tame it means the possibility in Northernmost America of a high civilization otherwise impossible."

It took me a full hour of talking the other day to convince on this point, one of the prominent officials at Ottawa, and he is now enthusiastically behind this scheme.

It didn't take an hour's talking with Colonel Roosevelt, and when he was behind a thing he was behind it for all he was worth. When he was in the midst of his last political campaign which took so much of his powers, I appealed to him to help me interest the Government of Denmark in the same musk ox project, about which in Seattle I had a chance to talk with Prince Axel of Denmark. This might seem a small and foreign thing in the heat of a campaign, but as always, Roosevelt was interested and willing to help. I knew Prince Axel would see Colonel Roosevelt, and thinking that a Royal Prince might be forgetful, I wrote the Colonel I hoped he would put a flea in his ear when he saw him at Oyster Bay. Here is the letter I got in reply.

"I don't know that I shall see Prince Axel, but I shall certainly do all that I can to back up the musk ox project if I do see him. If I can do anything with the Canadian Government, or our own, command me."

I didn't know until Mr. Akeley told me fifteen or twenty minutes ago that I was supposed to speak of Colonel Roosevelt as an explorer. I don't think it is worth while to go into a mere eulogy. I understand this is a meeting where we came to tell and hear the intimate things we knew about him.

We have with us tonight Mr. Russell Coles who is famous for his fishing of the devil fish. Some years ago I read an article of his in the Journal of the American Museum about devil fish fishing, if that is good English. The article impressed me, but I didn't know until tonight that it was that same article that impressed Colonel Roosevelt, and brought Mr. Coles and Colonel Roosevelt together. I have great pleasure in introducing Mr. Coles.

Russell J. Coles

Never before tonight have I stood upon any platform to address an audience. However, when the invitation came I at once accepted the privilege of speaking to you in honor of the memory of my best friend, Colonel Theodore Roosevelt. I realized that I could tell of incidents which have occurred during our close personal relationship of the past few years which might help others to know him as I knew him.

"Harpooning Devilfish," by Colonel Roosevelt, in the September, 1917, Scribner's Magazine, tells so well the story of our meeting, and of his last expedition into the great out-of-doors that I will only touch upon it briefly, in order to introduce certain pictures, some of which have already been published. The April, 1916, issue of the American Museum Journal contained my article "My Fight with the Devilfish," and I will add that a most accurate reproduction of the fish referred to in this article is now on exhibition in the American Museum of Natural History. This article brought from Colonel Roosevelt an invitation for me to visit him at Sagamore Hill. I called on him, and we had a long conversation. Several letters, and another visit followed within a month, and his training as a harpooner was begun.

In March, 1917, I assembled my outfit and a small crew, composed of picked men from several crews which I had used for many years at various points on our coast, in my work of fighting the big and dangerous game of the sea; and on March 25th, I arrived in Punta Gorda, Florida, accompanied by Colonel Roosevelt and my secretary, and that afternoon we made the run of 35 miles down the coast on a small passenger and freight boat, to a point where my crew and floating camp were in readiness. (Showing a picture.)

A good supper, and a long talk of details for the coming fight of the morrow followed, and all slept together in

the one large room of the boat. After breakfast on the following morning the crew shown in this picture started in the launch (showing a picture.) We were soon out on the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, and it was not long before a devilfish was sighted by the lookout, and Colonel Roosevelt climbed out on the cap of the launch with harpoon raised, and I with another harpoon got up by his side, and all was in readiness (showing two pictures.)

The devilfish was swimming rapidly toward us, and we ran full speed ahead, and I was about to give the order to strike, when I saw that this was a poor specimen and that there were larger devilfish ahead, so instead of giving the order to strike, I snapped the order "hard off" to the man at the wheel. The devilfish was within harpooning distance, and at the first sound of my voice, the Colonel, mistaking it for the order to strike, cast his harpoon, but by a deft movement, which I only told him of months afterward, I diverted his stroke so that he missed the fish.

A larger specimen was then selected, and at the word it was deeply fastened by both harpoons,—his harpoon being the principal one, and mine only driven into the fish as an auxiliary in case of need, and although I harpooned in this way both of the devilfish killed by him, yet on neither fish was my harpoon necessary or of material aid, as both fish were struck by him in exactly the correct spot, as I had previously indicated by drawings. It is worthy of especial note to say that he had never before balanced himself upon his feet on the cap of a small boat, jumping in a choppy sea, and had never before cast a harpoon at a living creature, yet the cast was perfect, and the iron went true and drove for 2 feet 4 inches clear to the socket through the heaviest and toughest structure of the fish. As the irons left our hands I yelled "down," and down we went, holding, as I had directed, and in an instant the fight was on. The modest manner in which he described those two fights in his article does not fully do him

justice for his truly phenomenal achievements on that day, as fighting devilfish is a sport so filled with thrills and dangers that few of even trained harpooners will ever engage successfully in it, for situations arise, and did arise on that day, which are very well illustrated by this picture (showing a picture,) which is quite an accurate drawing by Mr. Albert Operti, and is reproduced from my article referred to in the American Museum Journal.

The fight was short and sharp, and as he delivered the death blow I slapped him on the back and exclaimed, "Now you have added the killing of the most dangerous game of the sea, to that of the land,—everybody holler!" We did all holler, and I doubt if twice our number of Buccaneers of old ever sent a louder yell across those historic waters. That fish was quickly towed the half mile or more to the beach, and we returned, and after a bigger fight killed a bigger devilfish and also towed it to the side of the first.

The heavy work of getting the devilfish firmly fast on the beach then began, and for this purpose I had provided several heavy steel gaff hooks which I had myself forged, and which have sustained a strain of 1,000 pounds. I was hauling on one, and had two of my strongest men on another next to me, while the Colonel and others were pulling in other positions. Failing to move the fish I changed the two men, and the Colonel took their gaff hook. I waited for the aid of a small wave, and gave the order "now," and at the word I heard a snap and a fall, and saw Colonel Roosevelt turn a complete somersault on the hard beach; he had broken that gaff hook.

To the four men of my crew, feats of physical prowess stand as the highest virtue, and although they had lived their lives among hard, strong men, never before had they seen a feat of strength such as this, and from that instant, he became to them truly a superman, although they had been prepared for anything, by seeing his prow-

ess in standing on the cap of the boat and in using for the first time both harpoon and lance, but they did not know, as I knew, the tremendous amount of heavy physical labor that he had gone through with in preparing for just this one day of superman sport, for, in perfect preparedness for every detail, nothing was ever too small to receive his closest attention.

After a swim in the Gulf, and spending some time with the prizes, we returned to the floating camp and had an early dinner, then returned with cameras and took a number of pictures, two of which I will now show, and these will close the pictures.

The main object of the expedition was then accomplished, and for a week we enjoyed to the fullest the pleasures of that interesting country, which included quite a number of exciting incidents. Since then we have exchanged letters almost weekly, and I have visited him almost monthly, and several times we began making our plans for other expeditions, but for good reasons they were postponed; but at last we arranged for another expedition to the same field, and we were to have been accompanied by his son, Captain Archie Roosevelt. This night of March 1st was to have been our first night on board the boat, far down on the Southern Gulf Coast of Florida.

In the life of this most wonderful of men his many fine points of character stand out, each so clearly and distinctly that it is impossible to say in what one thing he reached greater success than in the others. Therefore, the order in which I cite some of his many virtues is not intended to give precedence to any one thing. His intense patriotism, and the story of how by his courageous speeches and writings he became the greatest of all vital forces in bringing the patriotism of Americans up to its high plane of effectiveness, has been so well told by the great orators and writers of the world during the last few

weeks, that I will only add that from close personal knowledge I know that the best that has been said and written of him is true.

As our acquaintance ripened into the close confidential friendship, I realized how greatly he had been maligned by the press. You all have read hundreds of times in the past that he was an egotist and a braggart, when in truth he was one of the most modest men in speaking or writing of his own achievements that I have ever known, for he at all times belittled his own work in order to give greater credit to those associated with him, and those who knew him best heartily endorse this point. He has been accused of using coarse language, when no one spoke the English language more correctly than he did. You usually saw him pictured with teeth showing, and in the act of making rather awkward gestures, and for a time I was puzzled, as I had so often heard him speak without noting these points, until last June, as I sat in front of him and listened to him making a grand speech. Next to me sat a press photographer, with camera focussed, and watching him intently. After Colonel Roosevelt had been speaking for more than an hour, suddenly I saw the teeth and the gesture wanted, and at that instant the patient photographer won, for I heard the click of the shutter, and then it was all clear to me, for I realized that reporters and press photographers were being sent out to get Roosevelt stories and Roosevelt pictures to conform to the popular idea of him.

He was a great field naturalist, and writer of natural history and big game stories, yet in this, as in all other fields of his varied activities, he at all times showed his absolute freedom from jealousy, by urging all who could tell these stories truly to publish them for the education of all.

Time is too limited tonight for me to tell of many things which I would like to tell, but I cannot close without say-

ing that my most touching memories of him are of his beautiful home life, and of his love of home, family and friends. In this connection I will read you one of his last letters, which I had just received and was reading when the news of his death reached me.

The Kansas City Star.

Office of
Theodore Roosevelt

New York Office
347 Madison Avenue

January 1, 1919

Dear Coles:

First, I want to say that all this family regard your letter to Richard as about the nicest Christmas letter a small boy ever received, and you give a most fascinating glimpse of your own Christmas. Next, my doctors tell me that in all probability I shall be able to go with you on March 1st. There is, of course, however, the possibility that my convalescence may be slower than they suppose. At present I am utterly worthless. I hope you understand how deeply I appreciate your taking Archie along. My great desire is that he shall get a devil-fish. He is a pretty good boy, and of course his crippling makes it hard for him to enjoy the kind of sports he loves, and which you and I at his age enjoyed, and I very deeply appreciate your giving him the chance as you have done.

Faithfully yours.

Mr. Russell J. Coles,
Danville, Va.

T. Roosevelt.

In closing I will say that as a member of the Roosevelt Permanent Memorial National Committee I have recommended that the most fitting tribute to his memory, and one in which the whole Nation and world can participate, will be the creation of a great Roosevelt Memorial

Museum, to contain books, papers, statues, pictures, trophies, a large auditorium, a publication department, and many other things. While there should be big game, yet it should be exhibited in a manner to bring out the fact that he did not kill for the love of killing, or blood lust, but as a clean sportsman naturalist, and that he was truly the world's greatest protector of animal and bird life. In the auditorium there should be frequent lectures and speeches by men who knew him. The publication department should be the main feature, with its Roosevelt Museum Journal, and other publications and reprints. Under its own management the Museum could be conducted as an independent organization, modeled after that of the large modern museums, and financed along lines which would give to all the privilege of contributing, and by sale of the Roosevelt Museum Journal and other publications, and by membership fees; or it might be found advisable to erect and conduct this Museum as an annex to some other museum.

The truth about Roosevelt should be presented in a way to make of his life an example to posterity, in a manner to lead men to better and cleaner lives, and for the education and uplift of humanity.

The Chairman: Major Anthony Fiala, who first won distinction in the North, will tell us of Colonel Roosevelt in the South.—Major Anthony Fiala.

Major Anthony Fiala

Like our leader I feel my inability to do justice to the subject of this meeting; and believe with the great French minister, "The Tiger of France," that we have lost the greatest statesman in the world. It brings to mind the statement made by Clemenceau some years ago, "I cannot understand you Americans—you have the greatest statesman in the world living in your midst at Oyster Bay—yet you are looking for someone else to be your President." Verily, a prophet is without honor in his own country.

There are statesmen who do their own will without thought particularly of the people. There are those who are forced to do the will of the people, and there are statesmen who anticipate the feelings and wants of the people, who have the prophetic instinct and are saviors of their people. Roosevelt was one of these in the highest sense of the word; he was a preacher of righteous government and honest living.

If a book had been written in these days like the Scripture of old, we would read something like that found in the book of Samuel. Probably you might think that is far-fetched! But you will remember that in Samuel the Spirit of the Lord spoke and said, Samuel, the people have not rejected you, but they have rejected me," and the Israelites paid for their neglect of the prophets' warnings by a long series of wars.

In 1914 an Englishman, a Frenchman and several Germans told me that if Colonel Roosevelt had been the President of the United States at that time that the war in Europe would not have occurred; that the Kaiser would not have dared!

In these days, with Anarchy raising its dangerous head, we realize what a wonderful champion for the right we have lost. Roosevelt believed in God, in humanity and in the people. He looked ahead with the eyes of a Seer, like the prophets of old. He was oft times many years ahead of his time in realizing what was good for the people. That is why some misunderstood him and because of his sterling honesty the hide-bound politicians hated him. He purified business. Of course the knave and the crook came down in the dust from their high places as a consequence.

On our trip through Brazil, we all felt the honesty of the man and his unselfish attitude. He was a good fellow to have in any camp party. He always wanted to do his share of the work and was the soul of good spirits

and comradeship. He called Cherrie, Miller and myself his "Three Buccaneers" and it was a real affection for him that we will carry through life, an affection we felt was reciprocated.

We often wondered at his endurance. A hunting trip he took part in on New Year's Day will illustrate.

On New Year's eve we tied up to the bank of the stream in the thick tropical forest, and took to our hammocks, for on the morrow was to be a jaguar hunt.

Brazilian custom is to take a tiny cup of coffee on arising, most delicious coffee it is, too. Breakfast is served at eleven or noon—rather a hardship for the Americans in the party accustomed to good breakfasts at home, particularly for the Colonel, for he always preferred a substantial breakfast and a light lunch, often no lunch at all. That morning we each had our cup of coffee and then Colonel Roosevelt and Colonel Rondon and Kermit got their guns. In the party there was also a fine athletic-looking Brazilian about thirty-five years old, and a tough, sinewy, grizzled captain of police who seemed about eight or ten years older. Several native guides completed the personnel of the party.

The hunters cut their way into the forest just a little before seven o'clock. Harper (the Colonel's secretary) and I left a few minutes later to see if we could get some birds. The forest was a maze of large vines, spring plants and all sorts of tropical vegetation. It demanded constant use of the machete to force our way through the entanglement. We had hoped to see some birds around the water, but were disappointed. I spied, however, a muscovy duck seated on the dead limb of what had once been a magnificent tree. The bird was over a hundred feet from the ground but one could not mistake the characteristic white patch on the wing.

She was outside the range of Harper's shotgun. So I fired at the duck with my rifle—a twenty-two calibre—and

brought the bird fluttering toward the ground. On striking the green she started off on a surprisingly swift run with Harper and myself in chase. It was an exciting chase toward the forest with the thought troubling us that the bird would disappear among the dark trees. But I caught sight of the duck going over a rise of ground and fired quickly, killing it. The bird had two bullet wounds, the last one clear through the body.

In the long chase after the duck we had lost sense of direction somewhat and in consequence had a difficult time reaching the ship. I knew the general direction for I had my compass, but in the maze of swamps and trees with a river that moves through the forest in numerous snaky curves one had to be very careful. It was hot, tiring work cutting a way back through the forest, for we had lost the way we blazed in. It was past noon when we finally cut through the thick growth on the river and were delighted to see our steamer in front of us.

Taking our prize aboard, we were surprised to find that the Colonel's party had not returned. We were worried, for we had reason to know how easy it was for anyone to lose his way in the interminable forest. We were hungry, but we all waited for the return of the hunting party before eating, for we knew that they had nothing with them to eat. They had not expected a long hunt. At four in the afternoon a tired guide came in from the forest and dropped down on deck to rest against the steamer's rail. He stated that the party had followed the jaguars so far toward the south that they could not return to the boat, that they decided to cut through to the river from where the hunt would end. Early in the morning he had been sent back with the information and instruction for the captain of the steamer to go down stream and look for the party. The guide was all in. He said he had been traveling along the river bank since eleven o'clock, for that was the only way he could find the steamer. The vegeta-

tion is thickest on the river bank and the poor fellow had been obliged to cut his way down the whole distance with his machete.

It was about five o'clock when we were hailed from the shore and breaking through the vegetation we saw the smiling face of Colonel Roosevelt, who was calling out to us "Happy New Year" in French which the Brazilians aboard would understand, also saying that he was in time for afternoon tea. The party aboard cheered as a boat was sent ashore. It returned bringing Colonel Roosevelt, Colonel Rondon and a guide. We asked for Kermit. The Colonel said that he was following the jaguar when they saw him last but admonished us not to worry, that he learned not to worry about Kermit in Africa. We then asked about the two Brazilians, and Colonel Rondon answered in Portuguese that they were played out and lying on the ground about a kilometer back in the woods, and that they needed a relief party to bring them in some food and drink before they could reach the steamer. He also stated that Colonel Roosevelt and he had carried the rifles of these two men in addition to their own, their shoes, too, for several hours, until they could go no further; then they had been obliged to leave them to await relief. The Brazilians looked in wonder at each other, with expressions of admiration for the "Americain Presidente."

Colonel Rondon then told of their adventure and their condition—for both were soaking wet—with the explanation that Colonel Roosevelt and he had crossed several lagoons infected with alligators and reptiles, by swimming, holding their rifles over their heads with one hand and swimming with the other. Both of their watches were ruined, but the men were both very happy, and the Colonel fairly bubbled with good humor. We ate a combined breakfast, luncheon, afternoon tea and dinner together. Kermit came in at dark, completing the happiness of the party. He had brought with him the two missing ones.

The party had not succeeded in getting near enough to the jaguars for a shot. Their New Year hunt, however, had impressed the party with the stamina and enthusiasm of the Colonel.

There is another phase of his character which has been demonstrated in many a crucial period of his life,—his great moral courage. An incident occurred during his trip through Chile that I will give you as I remember it as it was told to me by the Colonel's secretary who was present at the occasion. The people of the South American countries were very courteous and when our party arrived at any South American port the Colonel was always received by the Governor of the state or President of the city. They always furnished the Colonel an escort of an Army and Navy officer as a sort of guard of honor. They were splendid talented young fellows who could always speak French in addition to Spanish or Portuguese.

In the city of Santiago, Chile, there was a school which had been founded by the Presbyterian Board of Missions. It had originally been a Mission House but had been used as a school and called the American College. Its leader wished Colonel Roosevelt to visit the place and had invited him.

When Colonel Roosevelt arrived at Santiago, Chile, the authorities there provided the Army and Navy officer but in addition a priest was detailed to help take care of the Colonel. For Santiago was the home of the Archbishop of Chile and his Palace was there and also the great Cathedral. The priest had been a number of years in Canada so spoke English perfectly. He was a great acquisition to the party, for the Colonel was always an animated questioner and the priest who could answer his questions in his own language afforded him much pleasure. The priest came to his quarters often and Colonel Roosevelt found that he was full of information; he knew the history of the country and its institutions.

One day the priest came in and said to the Colonel, "Colonel Roosevelt, the Archbishop has charged me to ask you if you would accept a banquet in your honor at his palace?" The Colonel said, "I thank the Archbishop most heartily; I would like to meet him, but at not so formal a thing as a banquet. Could we not have a little luncheon or tea just with the Archbishop and several others if he wishes it?"

So they had the luncheon, a very informal affair it was called. But the band of music alone was over a hundred pieces—and all the representatives of Santiago were there. They had a wonderful time. The occasion was a memorable one for the city of Santiago.

The next morning the priest called upon the Colonel and felicitated him upon the wonderful occasion of the afternoon before. The Colonel grew quite enthusiastic as he inquired what this one and that one had said and as the priest translated the Spanish speeches of the day before into good English.

They had a most delightful time; it was almost a love feast. When the Colonel was feeling at his best the priest said, "Colonel Roosevelt, there is a little matter which has been troubling the Archbishop. In this town there is a little institution called the American College; it is an insignificant and mean little affair, altogether beneath your attention. But we have heard that the leaders of this institution have intended to invite you to their place. Probably they have done so already and, if so, of course, Colonel Roosevelt, we expect that you will not accept so mean an invitation after you have been a guest of the Archbishop and been entertained at his palace.

The Colonel looked at him and said: "How dare you, Sir! Have you not read, Sir, that I would not be dictated to by the Pope of Rome? And you, Sir, have the supreme affrontery to try to dictate to me whose invitations I shall accept and whose invitations I shall not! I love a good

Catholic! I love a good Protestant! I love any man or woman who is helping these poor people to understand the light of Christ! But I hate a bigot, Sir! And you, Sir, are one of these contemptible bigots who down in these countries place these poor people in ignorance and keep them there! Get out of my quarters, Sir, and don't you ever dare come in here again, Sir!" And the priest went out.

When I was returning from the Brazilian trip in the latter part of April, 1914, just after the firing at Vera Cruz, the steamer I was on stopped at the Barbados. I was introduced to two Mexicans who came aboard there. When they heard that I had been with Colonel Roosevelt in Brazil, one of the said: "Ah, Senor Fiala, you have been with the great Colonel Roosevelt in Brazil: So glad to know you. Do you know, Senor Fiala, that if Colonel Roosevelt had been the President of the United States of North America and he had asked us to fire a salute of 21 shots, Senor Fiala, we would have fired 23."

Now, gentlemen, I will not take any more of your time. I think this little incident will give you an idea of the wonderful moral courage of Colonel Roosevelt. He loved truth and honesty and truth for truth's sake, not for what he was going to get out of it. That is what this Club is standing for, for the sake of true exploration. The kind of a man we delight to honor is a man who recognizes his companions, who believes in exploration for what it will do for humanity, and who loves his fellow men. He thought of his fellow men. He was a great American. If we could have only seen with his clear vision, what he prophesied, this country would be better off. What a man sows, so shall he also reap is true of nations as well as of individuals.

The Chairman: In twenty-nine trips to South America George Cherrie has won many distinctions. The distinction that brings him here tonight is that he was a

friend and companion of Colonel Roosevelt. Naturally I was far away, and cannot say anything of personal knowledge about the trip, but I have heard from several, and from Colonel Roosevelt's own son that it is probable the Colonel would never have come back if George Cherrie had not been with him.

Mr. George K. Cherrie

Just a moment—I don't know what I am going to say tonight; there is so much that might be said, and I feel that I can say so little. All that I shall attempt to tell you is a few of the little personal reminiscences. But first—Mr. Coles has told you that some people have stated that Colonel Roosevelt frequently used rough vulgar language. Mr. Coles has himself contradicted the statement and Major Fiala has emphasized the uprightness and dignity of his character, and I wish I might emphasize them a great deal more. In the eight months of our journey together I never heard a vulgar word from Theodore Roosevelt's lips. Never once. It was one of the things that I think speaks most for his character. He was always clean, mentally, spiritually, bodily.

Now as I have said, I don't feel competent to tell you much about Colonel Roosevelt; but I do want to bring in a few of the incidents that happened on the Brazilian trip, one or two that have occurred since that trip; and perhaps say just a little in a lighter vein. After I learned that I was to accompany the Colonel on the journey through Brazil I felt I was hardly worthy. One day he called me down to his office, he was with the "Outlook" at that time, for a little conference. After we had talked the journey matters over, I don't know just why, but it came into my mind that the Colonel was a little bit opposed to people drinking anything stronger than water, and I thought we had better discuss that. He was busy

writing at his desk, and I sitting off at one side and behind him when I said, "Colonel I think perhaps you ought to know a little more about me before you take me on this journey. I think I should tell you that I occasionally drink a little." The Colonel went on writing for some time. Finally he whirled around and said, "Cherrie, do you drink?" I said, "Occasionally I take a drink." He said, "Cherrie, what do you drink?" Well, that was a pretty hard question to answer but I replied, "It depends on what is available. The next question was, "How much do you drink?" I said, "All I want." To which he replied, "That is all right; just keep on."

I have always thought it strange, since I had the opportunity to know him and know him intimately,—because I feel that I did know him very intimately,—how any man could be brought in close personal contact with Colonel Roosevelt without loving the man.

I am going to tell you of an incident that occurred on the steamer on our way to Brazil. I don't know whether Mr. Fiala remembers it or not. A manufacturer whose name I have forgotten, quite a wealthy man, from one of the western cities, was a passenger, with his wife and daughter. One morning on deck I met our friend the western manufacturer. We talked for a few minutes, when he turned to me and said, "How about this fellow Roosevelt?" I replied, "I don't understand you." "Well," he says, "I don't think much of the man." I said, "I am very sorry, but I don't see that I can assist you in any way." However I turned to him and asked, "Do you know Colonel Roosevelt?" "No," he said, "I don't and I don't want to." I said "Your's is a pretty bad case." Just at that moment Colonel Roosevelt came on deck walking toward us. As we passed I stopped, and without asking the man's permission, I said, "Colonel Roosevelt, I would like to have you meet my friend Mr." so and so. The manufacturer gave a very reserved "glad to know

you," but finally unbent and we three stood and talked together. Under the Colonel's magnetism I saw our manufacturer was getting interested, (and the Colonel was always interested in meeting people), so I slipped away. Coming back a little later I found the two walking up and down the deck together, discussing problems,—I don't know what. Here I must go back a little in my story. The manufacturer had told me, before the Colonel appeared, that at the previous election he had traveled 5,000 miles to vote against Roosevelt. The next morning on deck the first man I met was the manufacturer. He came down towards me walking rapidly, and said, "Mr. Cherrie, yesterday I told you I travelled 5,000 miles to vote against Roosevelt; today I would travel 10,000 miles to vote for him."

The Colonel was always able to make friends, and made them very very quickly. Now I am going to tell a story about him before I forget it, because it illustrates the man. He was always doing things for someone else. He wasn't thinking of Roosevelt; he was thinking of others always. The story is of a man by the name of Cherrie; it isn't this Cherrie. After we returned from our South American trip the Colonel made a campaign trip throughout the middle west, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, and several of the other States. I had expected to accompany him, and was with him at several points, but when he came into Iowa, my native State, I wanted especially to be with him. Before he left New York I told him I would meet him at Boone, Iowa. However, finding I could not keep the engagement, I sent a telegram that I was unable to meet him at Boone, but would meet him at Ames, Iowa. O. K. Davis was campaign manager at the time, and told me the story. He said, "We reached Ames, and the Colonel asked, 'Davis, hasn't Cherrie shown up yet?' " "No," said Davis, "I haven't seen him." They were in a little hotel on the second floor, with a veranda

in front of the room. There was a crowd gathered, and the Colonel stepping out on the veranda looked over the crowd, and called out "Is George Cherrie present?" Somebody said "Yes." "Well, come in," said the Colonel. A few minutes later there was a knock on the door, and in response to Davis' "Come in," a young boy walked in. Davis asked, "Young man, what do you want?" The boy replied, "My name is George Cherrie." Davis looked at him and said, "George, you have changed considerably." However, he invited the boy to come in and opening the door to the room where Colonel Roosevelt was busy writing, pushed him in. The Colonel looked around, and said 'Good morning, young man; who are you?' The boy said, 'I am George Cherrie. You called me to come in.' The Colonel whirled around and looking him square in the face said, 'Yes, you are a Cherrie.' " This George Cherrie was my brother's son. After the boy had explained just who he was, the Colonel asked, "Are you busy today?" "No." "Well I am going to Des Moines tonight,"—in the meantime the Colonel had received a telegram to the effect that I would be in Des Moines—"and I want you to go down to Des Moines, and go in my private car with me." You can all imagine how the 15-year-old boy felt at that. It illustrates perfectly the Colonel's wanting to make other people happy. The boy said he would have to go and ask his mother. It is unnecessary to say that the mother gave her consent.

Mr. Fiala and others have told us about the Colonel's ability to remember. I learned very early in the journey that this was true. While we were on the steamer we frequently discussed zoological problems, particularly ornithology. I would tell him my belief in regard to this or that; but long before we reached the River of Doubt I found I must be exceedingly careful in my statements, because he was apt to come back at me, and say "Here, Cherrie, back such and such a time you told me this and

that, and now you are telling me another story about the same thing."

Just a little now about the River of Doubt, of which there isn't any doubt in the minds of any of us who went down the stream. I don't think any of us would have come out had the Colonel not been with us. And yet the Colonel almost stayed there. There were a good many days, a good many mornings, when I looked at Colonel Roosevelt and said to myself, he won't be with us tonight; and I would say the same thing in the evening, he can't possibly live until morning. I can't speak of the others, but I know as far as Kermit and myself were concerned, the fact that the Colonel was with us gave us energy to do things we couldn't possibly have done otherwise. Mr. Coles and Mr. Fiala have both spoken about the Colonel's individual strength. It brings to my mind one day after we had lost three or four canoes, and were in dire straits indeed. We had come down to the foot of a long rapids, and the canoe men were to run the rapids with the empty canoes. We had carried the contents to the foot of the rapids, and the men had succeeded in getting down most of the canoes successfully. I had wandered away from the rest of the party, and was at the foot of the rapids, watching the canoe men coming down. They had a balsa, two boats lashed together side by side, an unwieldy craft that was caught in the angry whirl of waters and capsized. By some strange chance the two canoes instead of being whirled away and crushed were thrust down and held by the force of the current against some rocks. The two canoe men had managed to keep hold of the canoes and stood waist deep exerting all their strength to try and hold them, although as a matter of fact it was hardly necessary, for the force of the current held the boats. I rushed in but couldn't do anything alone, so getting out I ran as fast as I could to the foot of the rapids, and gave the alarm "two boats are capsized and held against the rocks by the current, if they wash

loose they will be crushed among the boulders." The Colonel and other members of the party responded instantly, but the Colonel was the first one in the water. We all followed as quickly as we could, and working in the water up to our armpits, finally, with our united efforts, we were able to raise the two boats, and save them.

At that time the Colonel received a severe bruise on one of his legs, a wound that troubled him from that time forward. Indeed, it was the first night after that accident that he was seriously ill, his temperature going up to something like 105°. From that time on he was a very sick man.

We lost one boat after another, and lost so much of our food that we were on very much less than half rations. Kermit and I had to watch the Colonel to prevent his giving to the camaradas his share of the food. He began to fail, almost immediately after he was sick with the fever. He seemed to feel that he was a burden, that he wasn't helping. Whenever either Kermit or I would protest about his giving his portion of the food to the canoe men he would say, I can't do anything to help and they need the food. We had to watch him constantly, and reached the point where if he didn't eat all of his share either Kermit or I would take what was left and guard it until a later meal. We had so very little that every mouthful counted at that time.

Finally, we reached a point in the river where the stream cut its course through a range of hills, rushing down through a very narrow gorge for 300 yards. The walls of the canyon here were nearly vertical, coming down right to the water's edge. On our arrival at that point we made our camp at the head of the rapids, just before they plunge down through the canyon, while Colonel Rondon and Lieutenant Lyra went ahead to make an examination; to see if it would be possible for us to get

our four remaining canoes down. I shall never forget the look on Colonel Rondon's face when he returned and reported. "We will have to abandon all our canoes, and every man fight for himself." Had we abandoned the canoes at that point I don't believe that any member of our party would have come out; it would have simply been folly. The Indians were on all sides, although we were never attacked. But the fate of a later expedition that the Brazilian Government sent down through the same stream has proved that the Indians would have been very hostile. They were hostile to the second expedition, in fact annihilating the party completely. That night Colonel Roosevelt called Kermit and me to him and said—he was unable to walk, — he turned first to me and said, "Cherrie, I want you and Kermit to go ahead. We have reached the point where some of us must stop. I feel I am only a burden to the party." He was prepared to make the great sacrifice. It isn't necessary for me to say that both Kermit and I immediately said and did everything that was in our power — there wasn't a moment from that time forward that either Kermit or myself didn't watch the Colonel, to prevent him from carrying out what he felt was a necessity, that is, that he must relieve the party of what he considered a burden to the party. Thank God he came through.

"All credit should be given to Kermit for our finally getting our canoes through the narrow canyon. We worked there nearly a week, and succeeded in getting three canoes down safely. The few supplies still remaining had to be carried over the divide or range of hills. I assisted the Colonel, and we spent the entire day making the trip over the hill and down to the foot of the rapids. We had learned long before that wherever the stream entered among the hills that we were in for trouble. From the top of this range we could look down and see the River of Doubt. (At that time it was the River Roosevelt. We had long before passed the point where

Colonel Rondon had rechristened the stream), like an arrow of light between the walls of green forest, finally disappearing among the hills in the distance. I am sure every member of our party, as he looked from the top of that divide and saw where the river disappeared, felt his heart sink with dread. We were so weak from the lack of food, the lack of proper food. We had been eating a great deal of the tops of the palms at that time, and eating it raw. It tastes a little bit like celery when fresh. We had nothing else a good many days. We could not possibly have made another long carry or fight with rapids.

During the night when we camped at the foot of the canyon, Kermit was on his watch, I could have reached the Colonel from my hammock. I had been dozing off, and was awakened with the murmur of voices, the Colonel and Kermit talking. The first thing I heard was the Colonel saying to Kermit, "Did Cherrie have a good dinner tonight?" As a matter of fact we hadn't had very much of anything. Kermit said, "Yes, father, Cherrie had a fine dinner." "That is good," said the Colonel, and there the conversation dropped. Speaking of a good dinner, when food was scarcest and things looked most gloomy the Colonel and I had a great many talks about what we were going to have when we got out. I don't think either of us expected to come out. But the Colonel and I would tell what we were going to have as soon as we got out. My favorite dish, when I got home, was going to be pancakes and maple syrup with cream. The Colonel said he was going to have mutton chops with the tail to them. Kermit would listen as long as he could, and finally would get up and go away where he couldn't hear us talking about things to eat. Perhaps I might tell a little bit more about Kermit and myself. Maybe I shouldn't be proud of this story, but I am nevertheless. Kermit and I had two or three bottles of whiskey. We felt the need of spiritual help occasionally on the stream going

down. The first bottle disappeared quickly; we had quite generous drinks. The second bottle went very much slower. When we got the third bottle out the first night, we held it up and took a pencil and marked off: this is the 10th, the 11th, the 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th,—marked off the amount we could take from that. We figured we had gone down 200 miles, and only had 400 miles more to go. So you can imagine the marks were close together on the bottle. The Colonel would watch us when we looked longingly at the bottle, and said "I am sorry I can't enjoy that; but I wouldn't, if I could. It would take too much away from your pleasure."

There was never once in that journey that Colonel Roosevelt didn't think first of someone else. It was his wish to be useful to others always. Whenever one of the canoemen was ill the Colonel was the first to inquire about the man. There is nothing that I am so grateful for as the fact that I knew Colonel Roosevelt, and knew him intimately. Knowing him was an inspiration, and, — well, — I don't know how to express it, so I guess I had better not try, I think I have said all I can tonight. I wish it might have been a great deal more, but it has been just as it came to me.

I was in the consulate at La Guayra, Venezuela, when the Consul received the cable announcing Colonel Roosevelt's death, he handed it to me without a word. When I read that message the tears came to my eyes — as they do now.

The Chairman: In a studio on the second floor of the American Museum there is growing now from clay a lion, that has all the alertness and power that belonged both to the real lion in Africa and to Colonel Roosevelt. Carl Akeley will tell us of memories of Colonel Roosevelt and I hope of memorials to Colonel Roosevelt.

Mr. Carl Akeley

I am perfectly sure that the members of no organization in the City of New York or in the county have ever listened to so interesting a series of intimate talks on Roosevelt as we have had tonight. These talks were made by men who knew him in the field, in camp, and on the long hard trail where the best and the worst that is in a man is certain to assert itself. These men knew, and knowing, loved Theodore Roosevelt.

It was never my good fortune to be a member of a Roosevelt Expedition, but it was in the field that my admiration for him developed into a deep and sincere affection. It was in Africa — he had been there for many months and I was fresh from home. We had had an interesting morning with elephants that was not without its thrills. All our companions and followers had returned to camp for supplies and we made ourselves comfortable in the shade of an acacia tree to await their return. He spoke then of those things nearest his heart — his family and the future of his boys — and I realized then that I had not known him before.

The Colonel frequently called me down pretty hard for not doing certain things, things for which I never seemed able to find time. But now that he is gone I feel that the things he wanted me to do are all important and must take precedence over all else. I know that many who knew him share this feeling — an incredible desire to do the things he would have wished and approved. So I feel that Colonel Roosevelt is still with us, a greater, stronger, more impelling force than ever. It was not Theodore Roosevelt who died at Sagamore Hill on that fateful morning in January, but the rank and file of his enemies were mowed down by the grim reaper. Theodore Roosevelt is now more than ever our big National asset if those who are left do their simple

and obvious duty — to perpetuate the traditions and ideals for which he stood.

One of the important means to this end is the establishment of memorials. I wish that these might be in such abundance that every boy and girl would be made familiar with the name of Theodore Roosevelt from childhood. The small boy in his "Injun" and "Cowboy" days will find in the life and writings of Roosevelt abundant inspiration to deeds of adventure and valour always with a background of sportsmanship and manliness, an ideal idol for Americans through all periods of life and in all relations with life from childhood to old age.

That Memorials to Roosevelt will be erected throughout the land there is no doubt. At the present time countless plans are under consideration. The Roosevelt Memorial Association, a national organization, has under way three definite projects, the Roosevelt Memorial Park at Oyster Bay, a National Monument in Washington, and a Foundation for the development and application of the policies and ideals of Theodore Roosevelt for the benefit of the American people.

Our fellow member, Mr. T. Gilbert Pearson, is Chairman of the National Committee on the Roosevelt Memorial Bird Fountain. The purpose of this organization is to erect a beautiful fountain commemorative of the work of Roosevelt in the Conservation of Bird Life. The opportunity to contribute to this fund is open and there should be a hearty response from the members and friends of the Explorers Club for we are all lovers of wild life and the Great American who has done more for its conservation than any other man.

The Chairman: I don't know much about the proprieties and etiquette of meetings of this sort, and I regret to say I don't know as much as some of you do about the constitution of our club. I don't know just what

such a meeting may or may not do, according to our fundamental law. But I do think we want to support big projects such as that outlined by Mr. Coles, and the things that Mr. Akeley has mentioned; and one thing that does come within our province, is to act upon Major Fiala's suggestion, that we do something to deservedly recognize the work of Colonel Rondon. I will read again a section from Colonel Roosevelt's letter that deals with Colonel Rondon:

"He has had no proper recognition of his really great feats, although I tried to get both the English and American Geographic Societies to do as they ought to have done for him."

There is probably nothing we could do that would please Colonel Roosevelt better, and it certainly agrees with our own sentiments too, so I suggest that the matter be discussed, and if you feel like that a motion be made with this end in view.

Mr. Akeley: I will make the motion to award to Colonel Rondon the medal of the Explorers' Club, with such inscription as may be proper. (motion seconded.)

The Chairman: Though this medal will be struck in bronze it signifies the highest honor within the power of the Club to bestow. You have heard the motion and it seems to me such a well understood matter needs no discussion.

(The Chairman then put the motion, and declared the same to be unanimously carried.)

The Chairman: The Secretary needs no instructions in the matter, and will take the regular steps to inform Colonel Rondon concerning the action of the Club.

If there is nothing further to come before the meeting a motion to adjourn is in order.

Adjourned



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